The Relationship Between the Invitational Education and Social Constructive Learning Environment Among the Students of Bojnourd Islamic Azad University.

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Abstract

**Purpose:** The present study has been carried out with the aim of considering the relationships among the invitational education, social constructive classroom learning environment and their components in Iran Bojnourd Islamic Azad University. **Methodology:** The research method in this study is descriptive and correlation. The research population is comprised of all the male and female students studying at Islamic Azad University in the academic year of 2016-2017. The research sample includes 385 students, selected through multi-stage random sampling. The research instruments are (a) Invitational Education Survey (Amos, Purkey, Tobias 1984) and (b) Social Constructive Learning Environment Survey (USCLES; Tylor, Fraser & Fisher 1996). The data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, step by step regression analysis.

**Findings:** The results show that Invitational Education social constructive classroom learning environment does not have favorite status in this University. The result also shows that there are relationships among Invitational Education and social constructive classroom learning environment and their components in the actual and preferred forms. The result also shows that the two components (Relevance and leadership) of the constructive learning environment (actual form) have the ability to predict 12 percent of the variability in the invitational teaching (actual form). Also three components (leadership, Reflective Thinking and Negotiation) of the constructive learning environment (preferred form) have the ability to predict 31 percent of variability in the invitational teaching. **Discussion:** The relationship between the invitational education and social constructivism is based on common principles for improving the learning and perception of the environment.

Keywords: invitational education, social constructive learning environment

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1. Introduction

Human Learning is one of the most complex abilities that many aspects of it have still remained unclear and human knowledge is unable to explain it. In fact, as Biggs (1993) points out, it can be said that the learning of individuals occurs under complex conditions and it causes changes in their learning. These conditions have different elements and each of them has its own effects. One element of these conditions from the Biggs and other researchers view, are learning environment and its background that plays an effective role on their learning (Biggs, 1970; Biggs and Fitzgerald and Atkinson, 1971; Busato, Prins, Elshout, and Hamaker, 1998; Ferguson-Hessler, de Jong, 1993; and Tynjala, 1997). Accordingly, students who have experienced a greater variety in a more appropriate environment will be more efficient in their learning than those who have not had a chance to deal with such environments. It can be said that identification of an appropriate environment is important in learning (Fraser, 2000).

Constantly, one of the interventional procedures for better learning is changing the learning environment (Ramzden, 1988). Learning environment, which sometimes is entitled "learning situation" or "learning context" is a general term and refers to various aspects of the school environment in different context. Now there are many studies in the field of learning environment perception that show the overall positive perception of the learning environment that can impact and increase the cognitive outcomes (Wubbels, Brekelmans & Hooymayers, 1991), positive attitude to the classroom (Henderson and Fisher 1998; Nir and Fisher, 1999) and increase in students' satisfaction (Fraser and Treagust, 1986). As Henderson and Fisher (1998) have shown a positive attitude towards learning environment, follows interest in educational topics. They also noted the presence among the peers who are interested in the topic, encourage other learners to the subject. Thus, we can conclude that teachers should be able to develop the optimal learning environment, and subsequently bring about positive learning environment perception in the students, and encourage them to learn better.

2. literature Review

Two theories that have been proposed to improve the conditions of learning environment are Invitational education theory and Social Constructive learning theory. Invitational education theory is based on a set of assumptions and seeks to describe, explain and provide means to invite people to realize their potential in all areas of human deserved endeavors. The purpose of this theory is addressing the whole nature of human existence and their ahead opportunities as well as converting them into rich, rewarding and fun life Experiences. In the field of education, how teachers can encourage or discourage students to learn is the main topic encouraged in invitational education theory (Purkey, 2004). Such Invitational environments are intentionally created (Purkey, Schmidt & Novak 2010) according to Purkey, Schmidt &Novak 2010 the principles of invitational education are as follows: 1. Respect: Human beings are able, valuable, and responsible and are to be treated accordingly. Believing this will lead teachers to have a more humanistic and ethical approach toward education, and will summon learners to have a more profound learning.2. Trust: Living a truly adequate, and fully functioning life is a cooperative and collaborative activity in which the process is as important as the product.3. Optimism: People possess relatively untapped potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor. (Product is the outcome of process. What process a student goes through and how a student goes through the process affect the product and the learning outcome).4. Care: To
demonstrate concern by sharing warmth, empathy, positive regard, and interest in others, specifically with the intention to help them reach their potential. 5. Intentionality: Human potential is best realized by creating and maintaining welcoming place, policies, programs, and by people who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally (People have a profound and massive capacity to learn knowledge and skills (Purkey, Schmidt & Novak, 2010).

Similar to Invitational theory, social constructivism theory view learning as a social process. It could only be made in person, rather than passively growth of behavior that is formed by external forces. (McMahon, 1997). Meaningful learning occurs when people are actively involved in social activities. Constructivist teachers use cooperative teaching strategies through student interactions and respect, sharing ideas and learning tasks. Constructivist teachers encourage students to respect and use other people’s ideas through reflection and analysis (Yager, 1991). The instructional strategy of constructivist teaching is inviting ideas, exploring, proposing explanations and solution, and taking action (Yager, 1991). Constructivist teachers spoke to his or her students in respectful tones. In a constructivist educational environment, however, students are made to feel that their contributions are important and worthy of being expressed (Schuh, 2003). Constructivist teachers seek and value students' points of view. Knowing what students think about concepts helps teachers formulate classroom lessons and differentiate instruction on the basis of students' needs and interests.

Social constructivist holds that learning is not in heads, but in the relations between people. Learning is in the conditions that bring people together and organize a point of contact that allows for particular pieces of information to take on relevance; without the points of contact, without the system of relevancies, there is no learning, and there is little memory. Learning does not belong to individual persons, but to the various conversations of which they are a part (McDermott, 1999). Social constructivism is a sociological theory of knowledge according to which human development is socially situated and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others (McKinley, 2015). These social interactions can be structured to foster human potential in ways that allow people to add to, rather than subtract from, the process of being a beneficial presence to schools and those they serve (Novak & Purkey, 2001). Social constructivism theory says there is knowledge in a social context and among the common people. It is the main tool of knowledge that interacts between the learner and his social environment. The social environment can be teachers, parents, sisters, brothers, friends or classmates. Social constructivism is based on certain assumptions about facts, knowledge and learning (Kim, 2006).

Constructivism learning is based on the students' activity and autonomy (Pritchard, 2009). It involves students talking about the subject and arriving at their own conclusions (Aulls, 2002). Constructivist teaching and learning approach and feature assist learners in constructing their understanding through their interactions with a broad range of situations (Bradley and Postlethwaite, 2003). A major theme in Bruner’s constructivist theory is that learning is an active process, whereby students learn best by constructing new ideas and building new schemas based upon current and past knowledge (Bruner, 1996).

Teachers based on Constructive Learning Theory invite students to be involved in decisions about their learning. This approach has an optimistic, enlightened approach to education in which the learner is seen capable of learning on his own. (Hurtle, Baviskar, and Smith, 2012). The constructivist approach, views knowledge as an entity, which is mentally constructed via the actions and experiences that the learner
undergoes with the immediate learning and broader social environments. Knowledge is actively constructed by the interaction between the learner and external objects through adaptation to the experiential world.

Jonassen (1995) as a constructivist believed that students learn with their intentional purposes. Self-initiated learning which involves the whole person of the learner, feelings as well as intellect, is the most lasting and pervasive ones. He developed a model for designing social constructivist learning environments and suggested that the learning experience should be as follows: active, constructive, collaborative, intentional, conversational, contextualized, and reflective.

3. Methodology

Because the study wants to explore the relationship between invitational education theory and social constructivism theory then it helps to broaden the knowledge of scientific discipline and it is a fundamental research. This research used descriptive and correlational method. The statistical population: The study sample consists of all students of Islamic Azad University of Bojnourd, the first semester of the year 2016-2017 which there are about 6,000 students. To determine the sample size according to the size of population, we used krejcie and Morgan table (1970). According to that table we selected the number of 361 samples from the Islamic Azad University – Bojnourd Branch, which has about 6,000 students, considering the reduction rate, this number raised to 400. Finally, due to the lack of 15 questionnaires, we analyzed 385 questionnaires. For sampling we used the multi-stage random sampling. This means that, 10 fields were randomly selected from all branches of field in Azad University (the number of 60 fields of study) and we selected two fields from 60 fields randomly, and two entries from each field.

A) Amos invitational education questionnaire: Invitational Teaching Survey (ITS) To measure inviting teacher behavior, the Invitational Teaching Survey (Amos, Purkey, & Tobias, 1984) was used. Preliminary work to construct the questionnaire dates back to Purkey, Amos, and Tobias, 1984. The questionnaire uses the Likert-scale ranging from “very seldom or never” to “very often or always.” The 43 ITS items fall into two dimensions, personal and professional teacher practices. The personal dimensions measure the teacher’s ability to encourage students to feel good about themselves and their ability in general. The professional dimension measures the teacher’s ability to encourage students to learn and appreciate course content. Within those two dimensions there are five subscales. The subscale on the personal dimension includes consideration and commitment. Commitment contains the items that indicate the teachers resolve to promote students social and emotional health. Consideration contains items that measure the teacher’s ability to communicate caring for the students as a unique individual.

The three subscales on the professional dimension include coordination, proficiency and expectation. Coordination measures a preparation planning through combination of instructional strategies that create and maintain a superior academic climate. Proficiency items measure the ability to demonstrate competency in special area and exhibit efficient management. Expectation is a single subscale item that measures the ability to project high expectation for student’s academic success (Amose, Smith & Purkey, 2004). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was reported to be .95 by Amos (1985) and .94 by Smith (1987). According to Amos (1985) and Smith (1987), criterion validity was used to determine its validity. They showed there was a positive correlation between invitational teaching survey and Student Attitudinal Outcome Measures (SAOM) (Amose, Smith, & Purkey, 2004). The results all show the high reliability and validity of the
measure. Therefore, it seems that the questionnaire can be a valid measure. To investigate the reliability, Cronbach’s alpha was employed).

B) University Social Constructivist Learning Environment Survey, Taylor and Fisher and Fraser (1996) make this questionnaire (USCLES) based on a The USCLES uses scales from two previously designed and validated instruments, the Constructivist Learning Environment Survey (Taylor et al.1997) and the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction or QTI (Wubbels et al.1991). The QTI focuses on the nature and quality of interpersonal relationships between teachers and students. This questionnaire has been translated in Persian for PhD dissertation (Mohammad Yamini, 2008).

Wubbels and Brekelmans (1998) in a study of the teacher factor in the social climate of the classroom have shown that students’ positive perceptions are better when teachers are ‘cooperative’ rather than ‘oppositional’, i.e. Understanding, Helpful/Friendly and Leadership behaviors are related positively to student attitudes. The same behaviors also resulted in better student cognitive outcome scores. This questionnaire has 36 questions and students in Likert scale responds with agree to disagree very much of (from one to five score) you want to move forward. Total scores on the six factors that make up the total scores and high scores indicates good understanding of the learning environment.

There are two forms of this questionnaire. One form is preferred or ideal environment and other forms is actual environments. The preferred or ideal learning environment questionnaire included questions about optimal learning environment in the classroom and the actual form includes questions about the actual environment in the classroom. This questionnaire has six sub-scales; relevance, reflective thinking, Negotiation, leadership, empathy and support. The first three scales of the questionnaire, relevance, reflective thinking, Negotiation are about opportunities for the teacher to engage students in communicative activity and reflective thinking – leading to deep conceptual understanding within the discipline The second three scales, Leadership, Empathy, and Support (or Helpfulness) are about the types of interpersonal qualities that need to be displayed by a university teacher in persuading students to transform their established epistemologies and approaches to learning to those are more in line with a constructivist epistemology. The internal consistency, or reliability, of scales is normally reported using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. To test reliability of questionnaires, 100 randomly selected undergraduate students completed questionnaires. The results showed that questionnaires are acceptable of Cronbach’s alpha value for each scale. Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire preferred sizes include: Preferred relevance 0.84, preferred reflective thinking 0.79, Preferred Negotiation 0.89 preferred leadership 0.85 preferred empathy 0.88, and preferred support 0.42, the total preferred test was 0.88.
4. Findings

To analyze the data, the stepwise multivariate regression analysis and correlation were used. To examine the relationship between preferred invitational education and preferred social constructivism, Pearson matrix of correlations between these variables were used as follows.

Table 1. The correlational matrix preferred social constructivism learning environment and preferred invitational education

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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** Correlation is significant at the level 0.01  
* Correlation is significant at the level 0.50

The results indicate that, there is a relation between preferred invitational education with preferred social constructivism and its sub-scales. There are 0.29 relations between the preferred total score of invitational education and preferred social constructivism learning environment that are significant at the 0.01. Relationship between harmony and negotiation is not significant among the components of the preferred invitational education and preferred social constructivism learning environment. The sub-scale is also significant with the rest of the relationship. The highest correlation with the subscale score preferred invitational leadership is of social constructivism which 0.50 and is significant at the 0.01.

Table 2. The correlational matrix of actual social constructivism learning environment and actual invitational education

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<th>Variable</th>
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** Correlation is significant at the level 0.01  
* Correlation is significant at the level 0.05

The results indicate that, there is a relationship between actual invitational educations an actual social constructivism with its sub-scales. There are 0.35 correlations between the actual invitational education and actual social constructivism that are significant at the 0.01. The relationship between commitment of actual invitational education and reflective thinking of actual social constructivism was not meaningful. Also coordination among actual invitational education with reflective thinking and negotiation of social
constructivism was not meaningful. Most of the relationships among the expectation of actual invitational education and the relevance, leadership and empathy of actual social constructivism which had a correlation of 0.41 were meaningful at the level of 0.01. Two separate multivariate regression analysis were used to check how many social constructivism learning environment is predicting the actual invitational education. In the first multivariate regression analysis was used the actual social constructivism for predicting the actual invitational education, which results are as follows:

*Table 3.* The variables entered into the multivariate regression analysis equation for predicting the actual invitational education from the actual social constructivism learning environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Entered variables</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>The criterion variable</th>
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<td>Step by step method</td>
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The above table shows the number of models that have been entered to regression. According to the table it is assumed that two models are: relevance and leadership components from the actual social constructivism.

*Table 4.* Stepwise regression analysis of the actual invitational educational based on the actual social constructivism learning environment.

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<tr>
<th>Statistics that have changed</th>
<th>F modified significantly</th>
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<td>.345b</td>
<td>2 leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the above table we have correlation coefficient, chi-squared correlation coefficient and adjusted correlation coefficient. It can be observed from the adjusted correlation coefficient square columns that the relevance component of actual social constructivism learning environment was able to predict the 0.10 of actual invitational education in the first model. In the second model by importing and adding a leadership component of the actual social constructivism learning environment in the first model 0.018 was added to the correlation coefficient square; the variance in the dependent variable and a total of 0.12 percent of the variability can explain and predict their criteria. Thus it can be stated that the actual social constructivism learning environment in the present case has been able to predict the criterion variable changes 0.12. Significance was 0.006 representing the changes that are significant. Thus it can be stated that the hypothesis is accepted.
In the second multivariate regression analysis the preferred social constructivism learning environment was used to predict the preferred invitational education. The results are as follows:

**Table 5.** The variables entered into the equation multivariate regression analysis and under the preferred social constructivism learning environment and preferred invitational education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Entered variables</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>The criterion variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step by step method</td>
<td>leadership</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Invitational education(preferred form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step by step method</td>
<td>Reflective thinking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step by step method</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows the number of models that have been entered into regression. As can be seen in table, in here, it is assumed that three models are: Guidance, leadership, reflective thinking and Negotiation.

**Table 6.** Stepwise regression analysis of the preferred invitational educational based on the preferred social constructivism learning environment components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics that have changed</th>
<th>F modified</th>
<th>Df1</th>
<th>Df2</th>
<th>R square</th>
<th>Adjusted R square</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>.515a</td>
<td>.545b</td>
<td>.560c</td>
<td>1- leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>.545b</td>
<td>.560c</td>
<td></td>
<td>2- Reflective thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>.560c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3- Negotiation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above table observed correlation coefficient, chi-squared correlation coefficient and adjusted correlation coefficient are seen. It can be observed that the adjusted correlation coefficient square columns in this variable were able to predict the 0.26 educational situation persuasions in the first model with the relationship between the individual components of the equation. In the second model, squared correlation coefficient increased as much as 0.032 by entering and adding reflective thinking to first model. The variance in the dependent variable was added. Also the third model squared correlation coefficient increased as much as 0.016 by entering and adding Negotiation variables to the model. The variance in the dependent variable was added. Thus it can be stated that actual social constructivism learning environment in the present case has been able to predict the criterion variable changes 0.31. Significance was 0.003 representing the changes that are significant. Thus it can be stated that the hypothesis is accepted.
5. Discussion


In fact, as Biggs (1993) points out, learning is influenced by a complex condition that causes changes in learning process of human being. These conditions have different elements and each of them effects on its own. One of the elements of the situation, Biggs and other researchers believe that learning context plays an important role in learning environment. (Biggs 1970; Biggs and Fitzgerald and Atkinson; 1971; Busato, Prins, Elshout, and Hamaker 1998; Ferguson-Hessler, de Jong, 1993 and Tynjala, 1997).

In fact, the relationship between the invitational education and social constructivism is based on common principles for improving the learning and perception of the environment. Invitational education theory emphasizes that people always see the world through personal and cultural filters. So an important aspect of invitational approach is recognizing individual perceptions which are meaningless and work with the perception that brings about common perception. From the perspective of perception, there is not irrational behavior. Everybody acts based on the feelings that he/she has in a moment. Proficient "reading of historical literature" is important to see what makes sense from the perspective of a person and for those who practice invitational education. This skill becomes more accurate with regard to the theory of self-concept (Purky and Novak, 2008). Social constructivism argues that, facts can be made through human activity. Community members together make up the world features (Kukla, 2000). The fact can be discovered for social constructivism and it did not exist before social innovations. Knowledge is the product of human for social constructivism and has social and cultural base. (Ernest, 1999; Gredler, 1997; Prawat and Flden, 1994) People create meaning through interaction with each other and with the environment in which they live in.

Another aspect of the similarities between these theories is to believe in collaborative learning as well as social and cultural processes in understanding the knowledge. Invitational education has a great belief in democracy. Democracy is of the opinion which people are valuable and can participate meaningfully in their autonomy. Invitational education reflects this participatory democratic culture by emphasizing dialogue and mutual respect and will create people work together to personality, skills and organization that improves lives will be satisfying partnership. The implication of the democratic approach is that, those who are affected by decisions should also have the right to decide. Another implication is that, if people do this, they will be smarter and more thoughtful. It is observed that, democracy is an educational approach and creating a living
will to participate meaningfully. Task of invitational teachers are collect factors involved in growth habit and sense to their satisfaction with the way of life (Novak and Purkey, 2001). Social constructivism knows learning as a social process. This only will not be made in person; growth is not passive behavior be shaped by external forces. (McMahon, 1997). Meaningful learning occurs when people actively become involved in social activities.

The next common ground between the theory of invitation and social constructivism is to believe in student-oriented practice and humanism. An important question in application of invitational theory is that, "Who am I and how do I fit in the world?" This question is originated from the basic invitational third theory that is self-concept theory. Self-concept is a complex and dynamic system of beliefs about the individual. This theory states that, a person’s behavior can be influenced by the attitude towards him and these attitudes also post earnings before income and human activity. Encouraging the development and promotion of theory arose the theory of self-perception. This basis makes four basic assumptions which were reasonably humanistic and person-centered (Purkey, 2004).

Also, according to the theory of Laurillard and et al (2001) Classes are run on the basis of social constructivism giving the opportunity to learners to participate in learning activities. It can also be important in the discussion of distance education. Kozulin (2002) also notes that with regard to the principle of equality in learning, all students have the right to participate in class and deep learning. He says that, class learning opportunity which social constructivism manages gets learning of all students guaranteed.

Also in these theories, teachers have a very high position. According to Piaget's theory, the teacher has a limited role in the classroom. While in theory of Vygotsky teacher has a very important role in students' learning. In this theory, there are many opportunities for an active and energetic teacher. Social constructivism says that learners can understand more advanced concepts and ideas without the help of adult or others who are more progressed. Unlike the cognitive-orientation constructivism, teachers in social constructivism cannot just stand aside and watch the students as they discover, but the teacher can guide students as they approach issues and they can urge students to work with the group for thinking about the giving subject and support them with encouragement and guidance (Saif 2008). Invitational education begins and ends with people. Everyone at school from teachers and administrators to janitors and volunteers are on the peak. They are people who create and maintain positive role models. These positive mutual relations should be based on a sense of sharing and participation. Lies’ interest and smiles not needed. School persons which coach’s students should look them as a social member who are able and willing to learn. Invitational Trainers should look at other people as people who can do the important things (Purkey and Novak 2008).

According to the obtained results, leadership as components of social constructivism learning environment has the most important role in predicting invitational education. Most researches pointed out the role of teachers and administrators in the process of invitations and constructions of learning. The results are in line with research of Moradi Poor, Jabarfar and Barzegar Befroie (2014), Seyed Javadi (2003), Parsa (2000), Estilen (2009), Hanter and Esmit (2007), Egli and Jans (2005), Egli (2003).

Egli study (2003) showed that there is relationship between personal invitational behaviors and professional behavior of managers with manager's job satisfaction, effectiveness, Manager as a school improvement factor, manager's invitational index and school performance verification index.

In explaining the results, we can say that, invitational education begins and ends with persons. Everyone at school from teachers and administrators to janitors and volunteers are on the peak. These people are those
who create and maintain positive role in communication model. These positive mutual relations should be based on a sense of sharing and participation. Faked Interest and smiles dose not needed. Instructors should look into the School persons as members who are able and willing to learn professionally. Invitational instructors see other people as encouraged persons that are able to do important things (Purkey and Novak 2008). Seyedjavadi's study (2003) showed that Students are excited by experienced teacher's instructions and this increases their learning. The Hunter and Smith (2007) showed that, learning can only occur on behalf of the learner and the teacher's task which provides creative, communicative and free learning environment.

Among these factors, relevance has the predictive power of invitational education that indicates the program and contents that is based on individual interests and needs of society that encourage people more. Purkey and Novak (2008) suggest that programs can be formal or informal, academic or extracurricular programs. It is important for teachers to know all school programs that are for the beneficial to all people. They can be effective in active participation by significant contents. This means that, elite, gender based, racist, discriminatory and unreasonable programs must be changed or deleted. Invitational education programs are comprehensive and involve everyone in the program. These programs encourage students to see themselves as a constant learner who are able to understand the important issues.

Negotiation component was also being able to predict the invitational education. Moradi Poor, Jabarifar and Barzegar Befrooie (2014) concluded that different students' perceptions of learning environment are based on classroom management style, and this difference was on the interest of teachers who have been interactional style oriented. We can say that the basis of invitational education is based on the interaction between sender and receiver of a message. The more effective are the elements, the better is the invitational quality.
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